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# NURSING IN MISSION STATIONS



## A TRAINING SCHOOL FOR NURSES IN THE TURKISH EMPIRE

By JANE E. VAN ZANDT, R.N.

Graduate of the New York Post-Graduate Hospital

ON June 17, 1908, three young women were graduated from the Training School for Nurses, of the Syrian Protestant College, Beirût, Syria. It was an occasion of great interest, they being pioneer nurses and the first class of women to receive instruction in the college.

Three years ago, when the school opened, we thought ourselves very fortunate in having five pupil nurses—three Syrians and two Armenians. Nursing, as a profession, is little known or appreciated in this country. Parents prefer to see their daughters sit at home or married, and consider their dignity is lowered by serving in a hospital.

The first probationers to come to us were two Syrian girls, sisters, educated in mission schools. They confessed, after being with us a few months, that had they known what nursing really meant, they would never have come. They had seen pupils working in hospitals, but thought a training school consisted of book-learning and instruction by the bedside, with the regular ward work and general care of the patient done by servants. They were most unpromising pupils. Probably for the first time in their lives they exerted their wills to do what was, to them, very distasteful, and it was not long before they began to take a pride in their work, and to really appreciate it. These girls were with us only one year, and were then taken to Armenia by their parents.

During the three years several probationers came and left for reasons of health or finding the work too hard. The three who stayed with us through the course have proved very efficient and we consider it a most propitious beginning to this new work.

Last spring circulars were printed and sent to all the mission stations in Syria, Palestine and Asia Minor. The school was also advertised through the medical students of the college, who came from all the surrounding countries. The result is that we have, this fall, a new class of thirteen nurses, besides three, who were here last year, and our graduate nurses. These, together with a waiting list of twelve, is most encouraging.



DINNER IN THE GARDEN.



UNDER THE PRIDE OF INDIA TREES.



TAKING AN AIRING ON THE BALCONY.

Our school this year will consist of Armenians, Syrians, Jewesses and one French girl. We have applications from Russians and Greeks. So, you see, we might almost be called an international training school.

The instruction is in English; our American text-books are used, and lectures are given by the professors of the college medical school, who are the doctors in charge of the hospitals.

We are obliged to feel our way along and adapt ourselves in certain ways to the customs of the country, always bearing in mind a high standard and the best possible education for the nurses, hoping, in this way, to be able to select the best material the country affords.

The probation period is four months; the applicant must be at least seventeen years of age and have a knowledge of English sufficient to enable her to study from our text-books; £2 sterling are paid on entrance; if, at the end of four months, the medical faculty refuse to accept her, £1 is refunded. After the probation period a small allowance is given each month. At the close of the course £1 is paid by the pupil for her diploma. I trust, before long, the nurses in Syria will be organized and have a voice in the international conferences.

We began about three and a half years ago, in a large two-story native building, the hospital, for women and children only, on the second floor, and our living quarters and one convalescent ward on the ground floor. These houses adapt themselves very nicely to this sort of work; the walls are either painted or whitewashed, and the floors are red tiles or white marble. No wall paper or carpets are seen in this country.

We have had such a cosy time in our temporary abode, and feel quite homesick at the thought of spreading out in the new buildings. The women's pavilion is just completed, and we hope to open it at once. The eye and ear pavilion will not be ready for use for several months. The cornerstone of the new children's building was laid last week. This year we are using our temporary hospital for the children. We hope, before long, to have a small place for skin diseases. The adult cases in general surgery and medicine are taken care of at the German Hospital, by our doctors, and the nursing is done by the Kaiserswerth deaconesses.

There is probably no college in the world more beautifully situated. The campus, on a slight elevation, overlooks the Mediterranean Sea, and off in the distance are the mountains of Lebanon, with their snow-capped peaks. All winter long, while Beirût is green and lovely, we have these beautiful white masses of snow in view. The college is a missionary, non-sectarian institution, receiving students from all parts of the world. Last year there were over eight hundred enrolled.

The hospitals, just outside the college grounds, are strictly educational institutions for the use of the medical school, and must be up to date in every possible way. This idea we hope to carry on in the training school as well.

Our patients sometimes come from great distances; many of them travel for days on mules, donkeys, camels or even walking. Frequently a bedouin from the desert will appear. These people are very suspicious and skeptical of us at first, but soon overcome their distrust, and make satisfactory and certainly most interesting patients. Last year one woman felt she could not bear it to sleep in a bed under a roof and begged to be allowed to rest on the ground in the garden.

The patients are constantly calling down blessings upon us. Often I hear some one trying to get the attention of a nurse, and, going in to her, ask what she wants. She will say: "Peace to you," or "God keep you," and only after asking a few questions can I find out what is needed.

#### ITEMS

*Spirit of Missions* reports the following appointments of missionary nurses: Margaret E. Wightman, graduate of the Woman's Hospital, Philadelphia; Agnes M. Huntoon, Chicago; Anne E. Cady, Albany; Adda Knox, St. Luke's, Duluth; Henrietta Barlow and Margaret E. Wygant, to Alaska.

LOTTIE E. LAWSON and Mary Switzer, class of 1906, Toronto General Hospital, sailed for China in September, where they will do missionary work in connection with the Canadian Methodist Mission. They expect to work in hospitals, aiding the medical missionaries.

DR. AND MRS. GEORGE MCPHEDRAN (the latter was Maud L. McNish, class of 1901, Toronto General Hospital) sailed from Montreal on November 21. They expect to remain in England until January 8, when they will sail for India, where they have been appointed to do mission work in connection with the Canadian Presbyterian Mission. Their field will probably be Sirdapore.

*Woman's Work* reports the appointment of Minnie Bell Maggi, of Philadelphia, to Paotingfu, China, and the marriage of Margaret Strathie, a missionary nurse in Canton, China, to Paul Jerome Todd, M.D.